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"straitjacket"?

3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, July 28

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
July 29, 2009

07:09 Took a walk around his official residence.
09:19 Met Disaster Management Minister Hayashi at Kantei. Afterward visited the emergency employment and economic measures implementation headquarters, followed by a cabinet meeting. Health and Welfare Minister Masuzoe stayed on.
13:34 Met Japan Medical Association President Yoshihito Karasawa at the JMA Kaikan in Hon-komagome.
14:29 Met Japan Pharmaceutical Association President Takashi Kodama in the Fuji-Kokuhoren Bldg. In Yotsuya.

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15:06 Met Japanese Nursing Association (JNA) President Setsuko Hisatsune and Japan Nursing Federation President Kayoko Shimizu in the JNA Bldg. in Jingu-mae.
16:02 Met Real Estate Companies Association of Japan President Hiromichi Iwasa in the Kasumigaseki Bldg.
16:40 Met Japan Dental Association (JDA) President Mitsuo Okubo in the JDA Bldg. in Kudan-kita.
17:44 Met LDP Fukuoka assemblymen head Isao Kurauchi at Kantei, followed by Upper House member Ichiro Tsukada.
18:22 Met Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura.
19:14 Returned to his official residential quarters.

4) USFJ commander rebuts DPJ manifesto

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
July 29, 2009

The Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto), in its manifesto or campaign pledges recently released ahead of the forthcoming general election for the now-dissolved House of Representatives, advocates reviewing the roadmap of realigning U.S. forces in Japan. In this regard, U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) Commander Lt. Gen. Edward Rice, meeting the press yesterday at the Japan National Press Club, expressed his intention to oppose the idea of modifying an intergovernmental agreement reached between Japan and the United States. "The Japanese and U.S. governments reached the agreement after holding talks for a long period of time," Rice said.

The DPJ has been calling for the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Japan's southernmost island prefecture of Okinawa to be relocated outside the prefecture. On this issue, Rice stressed: "The agreement (on the U.S. force realignment) has many elements that benefit both countries. Once we change individual elements, the whole would be weakened." Meanwhile, the DPJ also states in its manifesto that it will propose revising the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Asked about this, Rice said there was no need to review the SOFA, indicating that the United States would respond to issues with improvements in the operations of SOFA provisions.

5) DPJ to recall MSDF from Indian Ocean next January

SANKEI (Page 1) (Full)
July 29, 2009

The Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto), if it takes the reins of government after the forthcoming general election for the now-dissolved House of Representatives, will end the Maritime Self-Defense Force's current refueling activities in the Indian Ocean and withdraw the MSDF squadron next January when the new antiterror special measures law is due to expire, party sources said yesterday.

On the MSDF's refueling mission, DPJ President Yukio Hatoyama has clarified that the DPJ, after taking office, would consider Japan's contributions to stabilizing Afghanistan. The DPJ is expected to

enter into consultations with the United States before the law expires to explore alternative measures.

According to DPJ officials, the DPJ has been critical about engaging the MSDF in refueling activities in the Indian Ocean. "The special measures law is unlikely to be extended," one of them said.

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The DPJ released its manifesto or campaign pledges on July 27 ahead of the forthcoming general election for the now-dissolved House of Representatives. The DPJ, in its manifesto, does not touch on its objection to the MSDF's refueling mission, thereby indicating that it would allow the refueling mission for the time being. The ruling parties hit the DPJ on this point, claiming that that is different from what the DPJ used to say. Hatoyama and other DPJ leaders have made a countercharge, saying: "We're not saying anything different than what we've said. We are evolving."

6) MSDF starts escorting foreign ships

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
July 29, 2009

A second squadron of Maritime Self-Defense Force vessels, currently on an antipiracy mission in Indian Ocean waters off the eastern African coast of Somalia, started its first escort activities under a newly enacted antipiracy law yesterday evening (yesterday afternoon, local time). The new law allows the MSDF to escort foreign ships as well. In its first task under the new law, the MSDF squadron convoyed five commercial ships, including two foreign-registered ships.

The second MSDF squadron is made up of two destroyers the Harusame and the Amagiri, which have replaced the first squadron there for maritime security operations under the Self-Defense Forces Law.

The new law prescribes relaxed guidelines for the SDF to use weapons or Japan's own rules of engagement (ROE). The MSDF is now allowed under the new law to fire on pirate ships in order to stop their acts of piracy.

7) GSDF embarks in first major reorganization in 50 years: Capital Defense Unit for counterterrorism to be created; unified command under Ground Defense Command

SANKEI (Top play) (Slightly abridged)
July 29, 2009

Details of the proposal for the reorganization of the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) intended for inclusion in the "National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG)" to be revised by the end of 2009 were revealed on July 28. Of the five army corps nationwide, the Eastern Army responsible for the defense and security of the Kanto region will be abolished, while the First Division under it will be reorganized into the "Capital Defense Unit" with reinforced capability to deal with terrorist and guerilla attacks on the nerve center of Japan. A new Ground Defense Command will also be created for the unified control of the four other army corps to improve efficiency in coordination and operations. This will be the first major reorganization of the GSDF in 50 years. In addition to the Capital Defense Unit, the Ground Defense Command will also have the elite Central Readiness Force under its direct command to enhance maneuverability both at home and abroad.

When the current NDPG was drawn up in 2004, the maintenance or abolition of the army corps and the creation of the Ground Defense Command had also been debated. The GSDF has drafted its proposal for the first major reorganization in 50 years, since the five army corps were created in 1959, partly due to the recommendation of the

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subcommittee on defense policy of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) National Defense Division last month.

Under the reorganization proposal, along with the abolition of the Eastern Army, the First Division will be reorganized into the Capital Defense Unit, tasked specifically for the defense of the Tokyo metropolitan area. This step is being taken with the realization of the vulnerability of the capital to bombing and other terrorist threats after the terrorist bombings in London in 2005. The new unit will constantly gather the necessary information for the security of the Imperial Palace, the Prime Minister's Official Residence, and other critical locations, fill any security loopholes, and enhance its readiness. The 12th Brigade, another basic combat unit under the East Army, will be moved to the Northeastern Army.

The Capital Defense Unit will be under the direct control of the Ground Defense Command. The command of the Special Operations Group and the Central Readiness Force, including the Central Readiness Regiment which is sent as an advanced party for international peacekeeping cooperation missions, will be moved from the defense minister to the Ground Defense Command. With the above changes, the Ground Defense Command will have unified control over the specialized forces and will be able to move troops effectively during an emergency and dispatch troops for international missions promptly and continuously.

8) Uighur leader arrives in Japan

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Abridged)

Rebiya Kadeer, chair of the World Uighur Congress (WUC), an organization of Uighur refugees, arrived yesterday at Narita Airport from the United States where she has been residing. Kadeer will stay in Tokyo until tomorrow morning and hold a press conference today, according to informed sources. She is also scheduled to meet Diet members, the sources said.

9) Attaching importance to China an indication of concern? What is true intention behind President Obama's statement at Strategic and Economic Dialogue?

SANKEI (Page 9) (Full)
July 29, 2009

Hideya Yamamoto, Washington

At the outset of the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue in Washington, U.S. President Barack Obama indicated that the relationship between the United States and China is "more important than any bilateral relationship in the world." ASTERISK This statement reflects the Obama administration's foreign policy that attaches importance to China, which has growing presence in the political and economic fields. The G-2 argument, in which the two major powers determine the world order, is looming behind the statement. But U.S. experts well-versed in East Asian affairs do not think the President's tilt toward China will have an immediate impact on the Japan-U.S. alliance.

G-2 theory

At the opening ceremony of the strategic and economic dialogue,

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President Obama repeatedly announced his policy of placing high priority on China. With respect to regional security, which has become an agenda item starting this round, the President also called for China's cooperation for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula by suggesting the need to restrain Japan and South Korea from going nuclear, while pointing out the danger of North Korea's nuclear development triggering a nuclear arms race in East Asia.

Japan and South Korea, two U.S. allies in East Asia, have memories of President Nixon's visit to China in 1972 that was carried out behind the backs of Tokyo and Seoul. Partly because former senior Democratic administration officials, including former presidential assistant Zbigniew Brzezinski, have talked about a G-2 composed of the U.S. and China since immediately after the launching of the

Obama administration, the U.S.-China dialogue has been drawing attention as a testing ground for the Obama administration's China policy.

Vanderbilt University Prof. James Auer, who is knowledgeably about Japan-U.S. relations, took this view about President Obama's stance toward China: "During the Cold War, the Soviet Union was a major concern for U.S. diplomatic and defense policies. Likewise, President Obama might have concerns about China in the economic, foreign, and defense policy areas, as well." Auer's view is that attaching importance to China does not equal having an intimate relationship.

Denuclearization of Korean Peninsula

With respect to growing relations between the United States and China, as seen in the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, Professor Auer also indicated that the Japan-U.S. alliance will become even more important even if China's importance increases. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Vice President Douglas Paal, a China expert, too, indicated by touching on Japan's international contributions in the past, "The Obama administration will not reduce the importance of Japan."

But the two experts have differing views about the possibility of Japan going nuclear, triggered by North Korea's development of nuclear weapons.

Paal noted: "As long as the United States continues giving Japan a complete assurance about its nuclear umbrella, a nuclear arms race will not break out in neighboring areas." Meanwhile, Auer took this view: "If North Korea is continued to be allowed to possess nuclear weapons, South Korea, Taiwan, and even Japan will move to possess nuclear weapons. This is the nuclear arms race pointed out by the President, and this is why North Korea must not be allowed to possess nuclear weapons."

ASTERISK (Translator's note: What the President actually said was: "The relationship between the United States and China will shape the 21st Century, which makes it as important as any bilateral relationship in the world.")

10) U.S. experts analyze DPJ manifesto, find it acting like the ruling party in its foreign policy

SANKEI (Page 8) (Abridged)
July 29, 2009

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By Takashi Arimoto in Washington

"Speaking of its foreign policy, I would say that the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) is trying to show it is acting like a ruling party." CSIS Japan Chair Deputy Director Nicholas Szechenyi gave this observation after reading the Lower House election manifesto (campaign pledges) that the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) issued on July 27.

Szechenyi noted the differences between the manifesto and the one the party issued for the Upper House campaign in 2007. In the earlier manifesto, there were a series of strong criticisms of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) administration for its policy toward the United States, with such expressions as "at the U.S.' beck and call," and "blindly following the U.S." In the 2009 manifesto, although the basic policy line has been maintained, with such expressions as "equal alliance relationship between Japan and the United States," and a call for the revision of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), there was no mention of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's oil refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, an extension of which the party had opposed. Even on the realignment of the U.S. forces in Japan, about which the party has stated it would "thoroughly pursue the problem areas," the wording has been toned down since 2007 to "looking in the direction of making a review."

Szechenyi took the view that the DPJ was moving along a "centrist

line." He gave these reasons in his analysis: 1) there has not been confrontation welling up in the party over foreign and security policies; and 2) since issues in the current general election are concentrated on economic problems, the party has avoided making security policy a central issue.

Moreover, he pointed out expressions regarding the Japan-U.S. relationship had changed, which he thought was done to draw out U.S. interest. CSIS Japan Director Michael Green, who is Szechenyi's boss, took a harsh view during testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on July 25, saying, "The DPJ has no plan for transferring power, and since there is confrontation inside the party on security policy, it is unclear how long the party will last even if it assumes power."

11) DPJ likely to win majority of single-seat constituencies

SANKEI (Page 1) (Excerpts)
July 29, 2009

The Sankei Shimbun has learned through its survey on the Aug. 30 House of Representatives election that the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) will likely become the largest party in the Lower House, while the adverse wind is blowing strongly against the coalition government of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and New Komeito. It is expected that the DPJ will win a majority of the (300) electoral districts; and in the (180) proportional representation seats, it will secure more seats than the LDP, indicating the possibility of a change in government. A sense of alarm has risen in the LDP because whether even incumbent cabinet ministers and senior party member will win or lose their Diet seats is uncertain. However, since more than one moth is left before the election, there still remain uncertainties.

In recent major local elections, the DPJ has won six victories, including the July 4 Nagoya mayoral election.

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According to a poll conducted on July 18-19 by FNN (Fuji News Network), 46.0 percent of respondents said they would vote for the DPJ in the proportional representation race, while 23.7 percent would vote for the LDP. Toward a question which framework of a coalition government they would prefer, 38.7 PERCENT preferred a DPJ-led administration, while 14.2 percent hoped for a LDP-led administration.

However, some have contended that DPJ President Yukio Hatoyama has not fulfilled his accountability for his fund management organization's false report issue. Depending on the LDP's election campaigning, there is a possibility that the DPJ's momentum will weaken.

12) Prime Minister Aso finally to go out on stumping tour

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
July 29, 2009

Prime Minister Taro Aso will start on Aug. 1 to give speeches during a stumping tour. Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Yukio Hatoyama has taken to the streets to stump for the Lower House election after the House of Representatives was dissolved, but Aso has yet to do so. Some say that no candidates have asked the unpopular Aso for such support. In order to erase such a rumor, Aso is also taking to the streets to campaign.

The number of stumping speeches and the travel distance form a barometer for gauging the popularity of a prime minister. In the 2005 Lower House election, then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited 19 prefectures in ten days after the start of the official campaign, and he traveled about 10,000 kilometers.

Aso plans to arrive in Niigata Prefecture on Aug. 1. After meeting the abductees who have returned from North Korea and visiting the scene where they were taken by North Korean agents, he is expected to give campaign speeches in the prefecture. On Aug. 2, he plans to

take to the streets in Aichi Prefecture, including Nagoya City.

Aso apparently has received no requests for stumping speeches, according to a high government official. The Aichi prefectural chapter, however, reportedly asked Aso to come.

13) Gist of set of LDP campaign pledges

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
July 29, 2009

The following is a gist of the Liberal Democratic Party's policy platform for the upcoming House of Representatives election:

(Decentralization)

Q Produce a new package bill on decentralization measures, including those to disband regional offices of the central government and review the subsidy and tax-distribution systems.

Q Make efforts to implement the party's campaign pledges in response to requests from the National Governors' Association and other groups.

Q Quickly enact legislation on the doshusei system (regional bloc system).

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Q Introduce the doshusei system by 2017.

(Diet reform)

Q Reduce the number of Lower House members by more than 10 PERCENT , which comes into effect in the general election that eventually follows the next one this fall, and the number of lawmakers by more than 30 PERCENT in 10 years.

Q Restrict so-called hereditary candidates, preventing relatives with up to a third degree relationship with a retiring Diet member from running for the same constituency, which comes into effect in the general election that follows the next one.

(Civil service reform)

Q Totally ban retired government officials' amakudari (golden parachuting) and watari (assuming posts multiple times) practices.

Q Prohibit former government officials aged 65 or over from serving as regular executive.

Q Reduce the number of civil servants by more than 80,000 by 2015.

(Child-rearing support, education)

Q Introduce free education for preschool children aged between three and five over the next four years.

Q Eliminate school fees for students from low-income households.

Q Create a school expense-subsidy system.

Q Create a new scholarship

(Employment)

Q Help young job-seekers find regular works.

Q Ban personnel dispatch as day laborers.

Q Review the Worker Dispatch Law to improve the working conditions

(Medical service, pension)

Q Review the medical fee scheme

Q Improve and increase nursing facilities in three years

Q Strengthen measures for those who receive few pension benefits.

Q Review the pension scheme for elderly persons holding jobs.

Q Establish a suprapartisan legally-endorsed consultative body on bold pension system reform.

Q Resolve the pension record-keeping fiasco at an early date by establishing a Japan pension institute.

(Foreign, security policies)

Q Maintain the Japan-U.S. alliance as the foundation of the nation's foreign policy.

Q Prepare necessary laws related to national security, including the review of the government's interpretation of the right to collective self-defense.

Q Take a resolute manner over the territorial disputes over the Northern Territories and Takeshima.

Q Refrain from offering assistance to North Korea before the abduction issue is resolved.

Q Enact legislation to enable the SDF to swiftly participate in UN peacekeeping operations.

(Constitutional revision)

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Q Prompt the constitution examination commission and enable the Constitution to be revised at an early date.

(Tax system)

Q Put the primary balance of the central and local governments in the black in 10 years.

Q Promote preparations to review the tax system, including a consumption tax hike, after the economy turns around.

Q Use consumption tax revenues predominantly for implementing measures to ensure social security and tackle the falling birthrate.

Q Introduce a social security numbering system.

(Education)

Q Improve students' scholastic ability.

Q Improve moral and traditional culture education.

Q Enact a basis sports law and create a sports agency.

(Agriculture, forestry and fisheries matters)

Q Help enthusiastic farming households increase income by supporting their management in pursuit of attaining the goal of the nation's 50 PERCENT food self-sufficiency rate.

Q Expand the use of domestic lumber.

Q Help more people work in the fisheries industry.

(Environment)

Q Enact a basic law to promote a low-carbon society.

Q Take the initiative in reducing the world' greenhouse

(Economic policy)

Q Raise the national income per capita to the world's top in 10years as part of the nation's economic growth strategy.

Q Increase the nation's economic growth rate to 2 PERCENT in the latter half of 2010.

14) JCP to decide whether to support DPJ on issue-by-issue basis;
SDP aims to join a DPJ administration

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)
July 29, 2009

Nariyuki Tanaka, Shinichiro Nishida

With an eye on the start of official campaign for the Aug. 30 House of Representatives election, the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) are now playing up their own policies premised on the inauguration of a Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) government. Although the two small opposition parties have made efforts to survive in the form of opposing the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the DPJ, the number of seats they obtain in national elections has been declining. In the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election, as well, they were pushed into the background of the two major parties. For this reason, the JCP and SDP appear to be aiming at regaining their vote-gathering capabilities by taking advantage of the favorable wind blowing for the DPJ and shifting their methods of approaching voters.

The JCP declared that it would aim at becoming a "constructive opposition party," which would decide whether to support each policy through discussions with the DPJ. In the Tokyo assembly election, the party's seats decreased from 13 to 8. After that, JCP Chairman Kazuo Shii stated at a press conference on July 16 that his party would become a constructive opposition party.

At a press meeting on July 28, Shii announced the JCP's policies for the upcoming general election and analyzed the DPJ's manifesto (campaign pledges). He said that although the DPJ vows to eliminate bureaucratic control, it is not in a position to break away from the control of the business community or the U.S. Meanwhile, Shii pointed out that his party agrees with the DPJ's pledges to abolish the health insurance system for people aged 75 and the Services and Supports for Persons with Disabilities Act, and to implement free high-school education. He sent a message to the DPJ, saying:

"If a DPJ-led administration is inaugurated, the JCP as a constructive opposition party will cooperate with the government if a policy is good but it a policy is wrong, we will oppose it."

The DPJ welcomes the JCP's policy switch. The DPJ has decreased the number of its candidates for electoral districts from the 275 - the number it filed in the previous poll - to 152. The DPJ calculates that the possibility has become stronger that votes cast for the JCP will go to it.

The SDP expects to form a coalition government with the DPJ. Since the DPJ does not hold a majority of the House of Councillors, the SDP's cooperation is indispensable even after it takes over the reins of government.

SDP Chairperson Mizuho Fukushima said at a press conference yesterday: "The SDP will continue to call on the DPJ to drastically revise the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). In that sense, the SDP's existence is significant." Fukushima made this candid statement about the DPJ's policy shift on the SOFA.

The SDP intends to call for concessions on foreign and security policy and labor regulations in return for cooperation. However, the party is cautious about finalizing its conditions for cooperation at an early stage. At a press conference on July 22 soon after the Lower House was dissolved, Fukushima stated: "Consultations on a coalition administration should be held after the election. I cannot comment on that now."

15) Government outlines plan for overseas investment for food security

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
July 29, 2009

The government's council on promotion of investment in agriculture overseas held a meeting in Tokyo yesterday, in which the panel put together key points for the nation's overseas investment strategy for food security into a draft report to ensure the stable procurement of agricultural products. As measures to steadily supply beans and corn, the draft proposes: (1) Improvement in the environment for Japanese firms' investment by reaching accords with countries in Latin America, Central Asia, Eastern Europe and other regions; and (2) promotion of cooperation between the public and private sectors in offering loans to Japanese companies and on other

matters. The panel also pledges to introduce action principles on investment, with the aim of preventing Japan's investment from having negative effect on developing countries' food-supply efforts.